

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Volume 84

March/April 2024

No. 2

New Bill Boosts Great Lakes Investment

Bipartisan legislation from Great Lakes congressional leaders sets stage for accelerated progress to protect drinking water, public health, and Great Lakes.

By Lindsey Bacigal
Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

ANN ARBOR, MICH. (February 6, 2024)—New bipartisan federal legislation would reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, allowing the federal government to continue to accelerate its investment to restore and protect the Great Lakes – the source of drinking water for more than 42 million people – and to tackle serious threats, including toxic pollution, runoff, habitat loss, and invasive species. The bill

would provide a critical increase in investment up to \$500 million annually; in comparison, Congress has invested \$368 million in the current year for restoration actions.

The bill, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Act of 2024, was introduced today in the Senate by Great Lakes Taskforce co-chairs, U.S. Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and J.D. Vance

(R-Ohio), and in the House by Great Lakes Taskforce co-chairs, U.S. Reps. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.), David Joyce (R-Ohio), and Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), alongside broad bipartisan support from the delegation.

Passage of the bill is a top priority for the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition.

“This bill is a winner for millions of people in the

region,” said Laura Rubin, director of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition. “We thank the Great Lakes Senators and Representatives who introduced and co-sponsored this bill for their bipartisan leadership and commitment to tackle the serious threats to the region’s drinking water, public health, jobs, and quality of life. Federal investments to restore the lakes have been producing results in communities across the region, but serious threats remain. This bill addresses the reality that if we scale back investments now, problems will only get worse and more expensive to solve. This bill sets the stage to accelerate progress in addressing challenges to our vital water resources. We look forward to working with the Great Lakes congressional delegation to pass this bipartisan bill that supports common-sense solutions to protect our drinking water, public health, jobs and quality of



“New Bill”

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The Platte River mouth, on May 2022. National Park Service

Man Convicted of Diverting Sleeping Bear Dunes River By Hand

By Garret Ellison
gellison@mlive.com

GRAND RAPIDS, MI — A Frankfort man has been convicted on federal misdemeanor charges after he diverted the Platte River with a shovel and rocks.

Andrew Blair Howard, 63, was found guilty on one count apiece of tampering and vandalism following a Feb. 7 bench trial before federal magistrate Ray Kent in Grand Rapids, where prosecutors presented footage of the man building a dam by hand.

Howard, a local fisherman, was charged last May following a National Park Service investigation into the August 2022 change at the mouth of the popular river, which empties into Lake Michigan at the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

According to evidence presented during the trial, Howard rechanneled the river to cut through a sandy spit which had built up along the Platte Point shoreline and made recreational access to and from Platte Bay nearly impossible for boats.

The sandy spit had built up over several years to the liking of beachgoers and park managers — who halted 49 years of annual dredging at the river mouth in 2017 — but it hampered boat access at the onset of the annual fall coho salmon fishing run.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

(DNR) officials said the changes benefitted the river by lowering the water level upstream and helped alleviate a public safety concern by enabling rescue boats to quickly access the bay.

The Park Service saw things differently and reacted strongly after Howard threw a wrench in federal plans to excavate decades of dredge spoils and built more habitat for piping plovers, an endangered shorebird which is making recovery strides.

In a statement, U.S. District Attorney Mark Totten called the prosecution a matter of protecting Michigan’s “natural treasures.”

“Mr. Howard had a policy dispute with the National Park Service and took matters into his own hands, breaking the law rather than using lawful means to advocate for his position,” Totten said. “His actions resulted in significant financial and ecological harm and altered the landscape so many enjoyed.”

Calls to Howard and his attorney were not immediately returned. Sentencing in the case has not been scheduled.

According to a January trial brief submitted by

“Diversion”

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By Adam Trenz,
Metro-West Steelheaders
Co-Chair

What a great time we had for our final river event of 2023 back in early December

We went out with a bang! Although we had a little bit of snow on the ground the day of the event, all in all as the day warmed up, it was pretty pleasant!

Kirk Traver and Kameron Jacoby took off down river in Kirk’s drift boat with the plan to pull plugs. Marc Traver and Dave Zawacki had similar plans of fishing hardware out of Marc’s boat a bit more mid-river.

On foot, Mark Platt,

Mo and Eda Abdulkarim, Trevor Wisniewski, and myself set out with plans to bobber fish spawn bags/beads, with a little bit of

hardware mixed in as well also in the mid-river area. Upstream in the flies water, Jay Labban was on foot fly-fishing, hoping to trick

one himself Kameron and Kirk both found a couple

“River”

Continued on page 2



The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!



METRO-WEST STEELHEADERS

“River”

Continued from page 1

plug swipers, one around 5 pounds which was released, and the 11.90lb hen shown below which was able to score first place for Kam!

I had a little luck myself, hooking two and landing one on spawn, with the one landed weighing 6.50lb, which took second place. Otherwise, I believe just about everyone brought to

hand a number of juvenile steelhead, brown trout, and even a rainbow trout or two.

Back at the weigh in, we were greeted with a pleasant fire to warm up with as we snacked on some

smoked salmon and summer sausage as we told our tales of the day.

Following the weigh-in, the Traver’s served up an awesome dinner of lasagna, salad, and garlic toast which was just what the doctor ordered to warm us

up, and fill us up!

Kirk and Marc Traver both were outstanding co-hosts for this event! They did the heavy lifting of hosting the weigh in at their cabin, and serving us all a fine dinner! Thanks for hosting us at your beautiful

slice of heaven on the PM! I look forward to the next one!

Here’s to looking forward to more great river events in 2024! I hope to see some familiar as well as some new faces in the new year!



Left and Above: Metro-West Steelheaders each display their big catch!

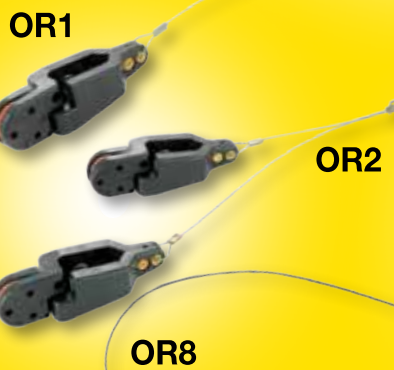
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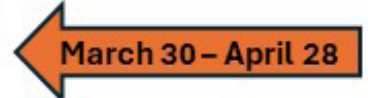


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2024 Saugatuck Fishing Tournament

“The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel” Big Lake Classic

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing association invite you to join us for this exciting weekend for a get away that is rich in relaxing, fun and recreation. Come and walk the boardwalk in the downtown area and see all the happenings of the Fishing Tournament and visit many of the businesses that help sponsor this annual event.

The 2024 Saugatuck – “The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel” Big Lake Classic will be held on Friday, August 9th – Sunday, August 11th. Boats will be allowed to stay and leave each day from any of the following Ports: Saugatuck, South Haven and Holland. Please call early and reserve your slip.

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association committee would like to thank all of the people for making the 2023 Salmon in The Classroom project, and the 2023 The Barge and Ship and Shore Tournament a huge success.

Tournament Participation for the 2023 tournament was 47 boats, 15 Pro boats - of which 7 places were paid at a total of \$21,000. 27 Am boats of which 14 were paid at \$14,050 and 5 boats fished the Big Fish Tournament only. The Denny Allen Big Fish Tournament paid 15 places at a total of \$5,100. 24 boats participated in the South Haven/Saugatuck Dual Port Championship of which the top 3 boats were paid \$5,800. Payouts to the fishing teams was at a return of 205% of entry fees paid.

NEW: for the One Day “Spectators Pretournament Shootout”: There will now be two divisions in the Spectators Shootout – The Regular Division and NEW “Women’s and Youth Division.” In the women’s and Youth division 1st Place will pay \$1,000 Sponsored by Bellman Oil Co.

RULES: Friday August 9th – Set lines at 6:00am, DNR Rules. Weigh in will be at Spectators Restaurant on Blue Star Highway just north of Saugatuck, Bring your 5 biggest fish. Must be in line by 2:00pm. Entry fee \$100

per boat. 100% payback for the regular event and \$1000 to 1st place in Women’s and Youth Division. Check the box on the Entry form or contact a committee member by 6:00am Friday August 9th. (Women’s and Youth division teams may also participate in the regular division with paid entry into both events.) (Youth is 16 years old and under)

2024: Dual Port Tournament- South Haven and Saugatuck – Overall scores from both Tournaments will be combined and a winner will be Awarded the Dual Port Tournament Champion! Daily Prizes for both Tournaments will be awarded each day to participating teams. Both Pro boats and AM boats will be eligible to enter this Dual event. Watch for more information on both South Haven and Saugatuck Websites for this event soon.

The 7th Annual “Denny Allen Memorial” big fish contest will have a guaranteed first place payout of \$2,000 if that boat is entered in the Tournament in either the Pro or Am division. If just in the Big Fish Tournament, first place will be \$1,000. This Big Fish event is Sponsored by Barber Ford of Holland, Mi. All boats can enter this special event in which any and all boats can try for that ONE big fish over the two-day tournament, one fish may be weighed per day. \$50 entry and 15 places will be paid. A boat may enter this contest without participating in the Pro or Amateur division if they so desire.

The 2024 Barge and Ship and Shore Motel Big Lake Classic Tournament is planned for Saturday, August 10th and Sunday, August 11th, with the captains meeting Friday, August 9th in Saugatuck. Boats will be able to dock and leave and return to their docks in Saugatuck, Holland and South Haven. Available slips in Saugatuck fill up fast. Please contact the dockmasters at Seargents Marine or contact committee members for assistance in getting your slip for the 2024 Tournament.

SAUGATUCK/ SOUTH HAVEN DUAL PORT CHALLENGE



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Or Call Tournament Director at 616-218-6686

For Dock Space contact:
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Dave Engel at 616-218-4812
Tom Earley at 269-207-1095

Sponsored by Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association

- ★ \$10,000 First Prize Pro Division - based on 20 entries
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- ★ Reserve your slip early
- ★ 2024 Friday Night Check In - Spectators Restaurant 5:00-7:00pm, Food Provided
- ★ Captains Meeting at 7:00pm
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The Saugatuck Tournament is put on by Sportsmen for Sportsmen and is a non-profit organized event. Monies raised for the tournament from sponsors and entries are put toward the payout to tournament, Salmon in The Classroom and the Net Pen Project.

Contact the 2024 Tournament Director John Watson with questions regarding the 2024: The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel Big Lake Classic at 616-218- 6686 or email 1137watson@gmail.com, or check out our website www.saugatucksportsfishing.com



- 2024 Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association Tournament Committee**
- 2023 Pro Division Top 5**
Hook Up – Cory Burrows – South Haven
Giv N the Bird – Tom Earley - Saugatuck
E-Z Limits – Josh Ezinga – Holland
Black Betty II – Tony Wolte – Saugatuck
Best Chance – Hunter Engel- Saugatuck
- 2023 Am Division Top 5**
The One – Don Bale – Holland
Big Spreads – Mike Meeuwesen – Grand Haven
Offline – Brad Stephenson – Holland
Squirrel Cage – Zach Blough – Holland
Happy Daze – Troy DeKleine – Holland
- 2023 The Big One – Big Fish Top 5**
Best Chance – Hunter Engel- Saugatuck
Best Chance Jr – Zach Engel - Saugatuck
Best Chance too – Dave Engel - Saugatuck
- 2023 S&S Dual Port**
Hook Up – Cory Burrows – South Haven
EZ Limits – Josh Ezinga – Holland
Best Chance too – Dave Engel – Saugatuck



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DOWN SPEED DOWN TEMP

“New Bill”

Continued from page 1

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life.”

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2024 reauthorizes the successful federal program for five more years, from fiscal years 2027 through 2031, to invest up to \$500 million annually to restore and protect the Great Lakes and the streams, rivers and wetlands that feed them, by restoring habitat, cleaning up toxic pollution, reducing urban and farm runoff, and managing invasive species.

The Senate bill is co-sponsored by Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), J.D. Vance (R-Ohio), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Bob Casey (D-Penn.), Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), John Fetterman (D-Penn.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), and Todd Young (R-Ind.).

The House bill is co-sponsored by Reps. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.), David Joyce (R-Ohio), Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Jack Bergman (R-Mich.), John James (R-Mich.), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.), Lisa McClain (R-Mich.), Max Miller (R-Ohio), John Moolenaar (R-Mich.), Gwen Moore (D-Wis.), Joe Morelle (D-N.Y.), Mike Quigley (D-Ill.), Brad Schneider (D-Ill.), Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.), Brian Steil (R-Wis.), Haley Stevens (D-Mich.), and Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.).

Since 2004, the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition has been harnessing the collective power of more than 185 groups representing millions of people, whose common goal is to restore and protect the Great Lakes. Learn more at HealthyLakes.org or follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Bluesky, Mastodon, and Threads @HealthyLakes.

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SATURDAY	10 am – 8 pm
SUNDAY	10 am – 5 pm



Dennis Eade, Executive Director
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dennis Eade



The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals heard CPMR's oral arguments to overturn the results of the Consent Decree negotiations in late January. We are awaiting the court's decision which could take a few months. CPMR is actively involved in efforts to hold the agency accountable for implementing the new consent decree in a manner that ensures tribal commercial fishermen do not over-harvest lake trout and endanger the sustainability of the fishery.

This coming week we should see a bill drop in the House, sponsored by Rep. Amos O'Neal, (D) Saginaw, which would update the commercial fishing statute to protect game fish species from commercial

harvest. This bill is in response to HB 5108 - Jason Morgan (D) Ann Arbor which would allow state-licensed commercial take of game fish, including lake trout, smallmouth bass, panfish, walleye, perch and other game fish.

I have been selected to serve on a Task Force Committee to study the potential causes in the drop in steelhead returning to the rivers this past fall and winter. It is my opinion that the cause is a capacity issue and not overharvest. Three NRC commissioners, the MDNR Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator and a select number of stakeholders have been tapped to study factors that may be causing the problem. We will be

meeting monthly in an effort to come up with recommendations to the full commission.

The outlook for Lake Michigan this year is optimistic with a very good class of alewife appearing in 2023. Now we will see how well they survived over the winter in order to meet the needs of nearly eight million naturally reproducing Chinook salmon now in the system and the coho, steelhead and Chinook salmon that will be planted this Spring. The salmon are projected to be slightly smaller and the Coho growth rates are good and we anticipate they will start showing up in late February. Grand Haven, MI will be stocked with 20 thousand brown trout fingerlings this Spring. Lake trout numbers are still down and it's probably due to Wisconsin's decision to reduce stocking on the mid-lake reefs.

The Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan

(TICOM) held a reception for legislators on February 14th which I attended. I met with Rep. Steve Carra and Rep. Julie Rogers from the Kalamazoo area as well as a number of Convention and Visitor Bureau executives who also attended the event. Sport fishing is a major draw for tourists and attracts out-of-state anglers from all over the country.

The Dr. Howard Tanner Award will be presented at the annual presidents' meeting in Lansing, MI on April 20th. It is presented to an individual who has made significant contributions to our anadromous fish sport fishery. The Presidents' Meeting will again be held at the Michigan Historical Library and Museum on Saturday April 20th from 10AM until 2:30PM

Consumers Energy, which operates 13 hydroelectric dam projects in Michigan, announced it will seek proposals from individuals or businesses interested in purchasing the

dams located on the Muskegon, Manistee, Grand, Kalamazoo and Au Sable rivers. Federal licenses to generate electricity from the dams begin to expire in 10 years. Purchasers can seek 30-year renewals of their hydroelectric permits, replace the dams or remove them.

The potential sale of each dam will provide local communities opportunities to preserve the dams and their reservoir lakes while reducing costs for Consumers Energy customers. The utility says all 13 dams comprise less than 1% of the electricity it generates.

The problem with this decision is the potential liability these local communities will face should the

dams be found not to be able to meet the standards necessary to renew their licenses. Many of them are well beyond their life span and are in need of major restoration.

So, the stage is set for a new year of challenges. We need to voice our concerns and work to protect our resources. Removing obsolete dams and opening up miles of productive habitat for cold water species is going to be critical to MS-SFA's ongoing success for preserving our cold-water salmon and trout.



Platte River mouth on Aug. 19, 2022. National Park Service

"Diversion" Continued from page 1

prosecutors, a park ranger witnessed Howard using a shovel and stacking rocks to dam the river on Aug. 15, 2022.

The ranger's body camera footage and receipts from the Frankfort Hardware store where the shovel was purchased were presented as evidence during the trial.

Other witnesses testified they saw Howard build the dam.

According to the ranger, Howard dammed the river after being unable to navigate his boat into the bay that morning and later caught a coho salmon once the mouth was deepened.

After Howard built a dam, the natural power of the river widened the previously shallow, meandering river mouth to about 200 feet and resulted in an "an influx in the number of fishermen that came to Platte River boat launch to take advantage of the favorable conditions of access created by the new channel," according to the trial brief.

The spit has begun to reform over the past 17 months.

In December 2023, the Park Service excavated the beach to remove 2,000 cubic yards of rocky sand as part of a \$328,500 project to build piping plover habitat.

Park manager say the new habitat areas may result in newly restricted access at the popular beach if a plover decides to nest within new protective berms.

Dredging has been a point of conflict between federal, state and local officials since the Park Service ceased dredging in 2013 and stopped the DNR from doing it in 2017.

The Park Service called the pebble-strewn beach an "aesthetic irritant" to swimmers in its 2016 environmental assessment, which concluded that putting dredge spoils on the beach prevented dune vegetation from becoming re-established.

Local officials say a fully naturalized river mouth impedes boat access to the bay for fishing and emergency rescue craft.

Platte Point is a high-use area where multiple swimmers have died and marine rescue must now either launch from Empire, Frankfort or come via helicopter.

The Park Service has resisted proposals to establish a nearby alternate launch site directly onto the bay at the end of Tietsma Road out of concern it would cut through habitat for piping plovers and other threatened or endangered dune plants.

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Consumers Energy Nearly Ready for Bids on 13 Hydropower Dams

By Sheri McWhirter | smcwhirter@mlive.com

JACKSON, MI – Consumers Energy said it will issue a request for proposals this month to find qualified buyers for its 13 hydroelectric dams the company wishes to sell.

The utility said on Friday, Feb. 2, that it wants to identify potential new owners and make sure they are qualified before taking bids and selling the 13 dams found on five Lower Michigan rivers. The company said it's expected the process will be finished this year.

Expensive upkeep and needed capital upgrades on the 100-year-old dams left Consumers with a yearly \$150 million-plus loss on its hydropower. The company announced last year it was ready to explore selling its fleet of hydropower dams and put a greater focus on renewable sources like wind and solar fields.

Company officials spent recent months hosting listening sessions in the communities where the dams have for decades provided impoundments and various recreational opportunities. Hundreds showed up at the sessions and it became clear that the prospect of changes to their local rivers spurred a lot of community emotion and feedback.

"Issuing (a request for proposals) for these historic facilities will provide even more opportunities for people to offer ideas to preserve the dams and their reservoirs, while also enabling Consumers Energy to reduce costs for all of our customers," said Norm Kapala, Consumers Energy's vice president of generation operations.

Company officials said hydroelectricity costs ratepayers nine times as much as any other power source. That's simply too inefficient to keep the dams in the company's generation

portfolio, they said.

Consumers Energy hired the Grand Rapids-based firm Clear Energy Brokerage & Consulting to plan and manage the request for proposals.

The process opens on Feb. 15 and successful participants will move through a two-step process, first an evaluation before bidding.

Options for each of the 13 dams include renewing operating licenses for another 30 years, selling the structures to another owner, replacing the infrastructure, or removing them and restoring the natural flow of the streams.

Consumers Energy's federal operating licenses on the Au Sable, Grand, Kalamazoo, Manistee, and Muskegon rivers are set to expire between 2034 and 2041. Six dams are on the Au Sable in northern Michigan, along with three on the Muskegon, two on the Manistee, and one each on the Grand and Kalamazoo

rivers.

The dams serve as barriers to Great Lakes invasive species like sea lamprey that could otherwise migrate upstream into these rivers, which all spill into either Lake Michigan or Lake Huron.

Other companies, non-profit organizations, and community groups that wish to take over one or more of the hydropower dams can immediately register their interest and turn in their initial bids by March 15.

Photos, top to bottom: Foote Dam on the the Au Sable River.

Tippy Dam Crews work on the spillway of the Tippy Dam, underneath which 20,000 bats hibernate during the winter.

Croton Dam on the Muskegon River.



Photo credit: Garret Ellison



Photo credit: Joel Rennick



Photo credit: Garret Ellison

MSSFA Board of Directors Meetings 2024

Via TEAMS - 6:00pm

- Sat. April 20
- Wed. June 19
- Wed. August 21
- Wed. October 16
- Wed. December 11

2024 Tentative Print Schedule

Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/13/23	01/03/24
2	02/14/24	03/04/24
3	04/12/24	05/03/24
4	06/12/24	07/02/24
5	08/14/24	09/03/24
6	10/11/24	11/04/24

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

MSSFA, *Publisher* Bonnie Eade, *Accountant*
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 Stafford Printing, *Printing* Greenville, MI
 Cell: 616-928-8970
 bonnie.glsfn@charter.net
 Dennis Eade, *Managing Editor*
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 Cel: 616-836-0037
 deneade@charter.net
 Laura Kleinheksel, *Layout*
 laura.glsfn@charter.net

The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News (GLSFN) is the official publication of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA). Subscription to the GLSFN is through membership in MSSFA. The GLSFN publishes six issues per year. Permission for reprint from this publication is normally permitted, unless otherwise stipulated by the article, and proper credit is given to the author and the publication. The GLSFN or MSSFA does not necessarily agree or support the contents of articles within this publication. The views expressed are those of the author(s) of the articles.

MICHIGAN STEELHEAD AND SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Business Office P.O. Box 8034 Holland, MI 49422
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 e-mail: deneade@charter.net
 Tim Stegeman, *President*
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The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) is a multi-state, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing, the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. Commonly referred to as *The Michigan Steelheaders*, or simply *Steelheaders*. MSSFA represents sport fishing families in the Great Lakes region. MSSFA encourages the strictest observances of sport fishing laws and ethical fishing practices. www.MSSFA.org

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Dennis Eade	Executive Director Lake Michigan Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee Lake Huron Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee	deneade@charter.net
Don Remington	Vice President	remingtondonald014@gmail.com
Gerry Sickon	Secretary Lake Erie Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee	gsickon@ford.com
Alex Fergus	Treasurer	afergus63@gmail.com
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THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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MSSFA was incorporated in 1971 by a handful of individuals who knew that Michigan's newly formed trout and salmon fishery was something worth working to protect. They were a small group who wanted to not only protect their fishery, but learn how to catch their elusive prey and tell fishing stories.

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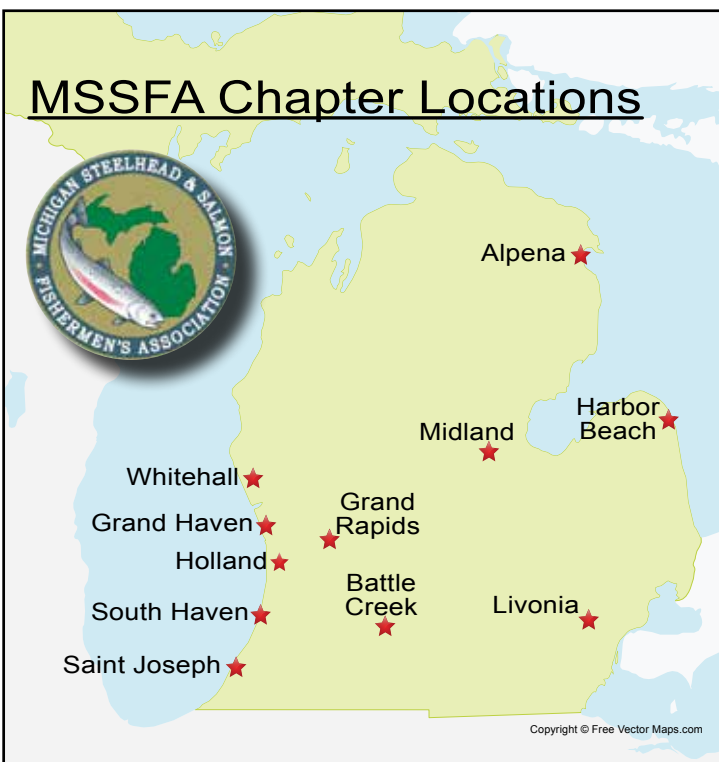
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Dams and Dam Removal in Michigan

By Bob Stuber,
Executive Director
Michigan Hydro
Relicensing Coalition

Like most of the country, Michigan's rivers and streams are plugged with thousands of dams, big and small. According to the Michigan Dam Safety Task Force report that was issued following the 2020 catastrophic Edenville and Sanford Dam failures on the Tittabawassee River, there are more than 2,600 known dams in the state, and likely more that haven't crossed state regulators' radar. The state estimates that 72,000 miles of Michigan rivers are fragmented by dams. In addition, the majority of the dams fall into the "aging infrastructure" category, being between 50 and 100 years in age, and many are in need of repair.

Dr. Bryan Burroughs of Michigan TU provided an excellent summary of the ongoing effort to accelerate dam removals in Michigan: "Dams, Dams, Dams" in the Fall 2022 issue of Michigan Trout. In addition to describing the ongoing effort to remove dams, the article summarizes how dams negatively affect water quality, block migration and interrupt reproduction of numerous native and game fish species and other aquatic organisms, prevent natural sediment transport, and eliminate conveyance of wood and other organic materials to downstream waters.

The Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition, a coalition made up of Anglers of the Au Sable, Michigan Trout Unlimited, Great Lakes Federation of Fly Fishers International, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, and the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association, has been focused on hydropower dam issues and management since the early 1990s, including advocating for dam removal for river restoration. The Coalition has been a partner in two of the more significant hydropower dam removal projects in northern Michigan: Stronach Dam on the Pine River and the three dams on the Boardman River.

The Coalition is also actively engaged in the current Consumers Energy long-term hydropower project planning that will be considering decommissioning and dam removal as one of the potential outcomes. This long-term hydropower planning presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address the adverse legacy that hydropower dams have had on the coldwater fisheries of the Au Sable, Manistee, and Muskegon Rivers. As a general policy, the Coalition joins the Michigan DNR in advocating for restoration of river systems through removal of barriers and dams when possible. While dam removal is our

ideal preference, the Coalition and the DNR recognize that the current undertaking by Consumers is complex as the hydropower projects provide many associated community recreational and other project-related benefits (e.g., sensitive species habitat), and the long-term hydropower planning is not likely to lead to a one-size-fits-all approach. However, many of these dams are now in need of major capital investments. The cost of wind and solar electricity has dropped while hydropower has increased, resulting in 1 MW of hydropower generated electricity now costing about 31 times as much as 1 MW of wind electricity. The bottom line is that many of

these dams are not economically cost-efficient for the small amount of electricity they produce (and they continue to impair valuable coldwater fisheries!).

Beyond the hydropower dam world, there is a growing effort to remove other dams in Michigan. Kelly House of Bridge Michigan wrote an excellent article entitled "Michigan steps up dam removal in race against climate change" (October 16, 2023). In a quest to defend Michigan's rivers against climate change, resource agencies, the Tribes, and fisheries advocates are increasingly zeroing in on a simple strategy to restore rivers by lowering water temperatures and recon-

necting miles of habitat: removing dams. Key leaders in facilitating dam removal in northern Michigan are Huron Pines, Conservation Resource Alliance, and the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly.

Huron Pines, serving northeastern Michigan including the Au Sable River watershed, has led the effort to remove seven dams since 2007. Most notable was the Song of the River dam removal on the Pigeon River (https://www.huronpines.org/reconnectingourwaterways). In addition, five more dam removals are in the planning phase.

Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA), Huron-Pines' counterpart in

northwestern lower Michigan, has led 40+ dam removals to date spanning seven watersheds. One additional dam removal will be implemented in 2024, three more are in the design phase, and another three dams are in the discussion phase for dam removal (https://www.rivercare.org/rivercare/). The most significant dam removal project managed by CRA was the Boardman River dam removal and restoration ("The Boardman, A River Reborn" by Kimberly Balke in the Summer 2020 issue of Michigan Trout).

Finally, removing dams in the Muskegon River watershed is a priority for the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. A current proj-

ect of interest for coldwater enthusiasts is the removal of Altona Dam on the Little Muskegon River, an important coldwater fishery (https://mrwa.org/mrwa_projects/altona-dam/).

"Dams and dam removals are critical in our fight for the future of Michigan's coldwater fisheries. Water temperature and watershed connectivity are fundamental to having healthy and resilient coldwater fisheries to pass to future generations. The number of dams and their negative impact is a current impairment and threat but provides valuable opportunities to improve cold waters for the future."



Located in the Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan's Delta County, the Carr Creek Dam has structurally failed yet inhibits fish passage. Removal of this dam would reconnect over 10 miles of Carr Creek.

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I Speak for the Fish: Bringing Muskie to the Masses

By Kathy Johnson
www.greatlakesnow.org

I had to see the muskie site for myself. My husband and I discussed our plan as we wound our way down the narrow gravel two-track. The lane was the dividing line between acres of rectangular ponds roughly the size of peewee football fields.

We slowly rolled past acre-after-acre of fish-rearing ponds. A lack of trees or any kind of shrubbery gave it a starkly human-made feel. An occasional sign denoted the species being raised otherwise there was nothing to distinguish one pond from the next.

We checked two locked gates before finding the one that had been left open for us. Three ponds were evenly spaced in a straight row. The perimeter of the entire area was secured with a chain-link fence.

The surface of the water was a good ten feet below the ground level. The ponds looked like giant swimming pools with only a couple of feet of water at the bottom. Black rubber liners spanned the bottom of each pond and extended halfway up the steep banks.

My husband and I spoke in hushed tones because the behavior we wanted to capture on film would only last a split second. We needed to be ready and very lucky.

Raising muskie

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has been raising and stocking muskie since the 1950s. I've previously written about this illustrious fish, Meeting the Mysterious Muskie and Who caught the world's biggest muskie, and this month Great Lakes Now will feature a segment on the Michigan DNR

muskie rearing program. Here are some interesting facts that didn't make the final cut:

Disease prevention is one of the important but not visually interesting parts of the process. Collecting adults from the wild presents the risk of bringing outside contaminants into the hatchery which could be catastrophic.

The researchers take preventative measures at nearly every step to prevent disease transmission.

During the adult egg collections, the fish are removed from the Detroit River and placed in a large iodine bath to rinse off every drop of river water. Once the eggs are fertilized, they are also placed in small bowls and given an iodine bath dockside.

As each group or family of eggs is checked into the hatchery, they are once again bathed with iodine.

The iodine disinfects without any adverse effects on the fish or eggs.

When the eggs and milt are collected, a tissue sample is also taken from each adult and sent to Lansing for testing. Each group of eggs is isolated until their parents' test results come back. If any parent tests positive for any disease, their offspring will be removed.

Even the hatchery's welcome mat functions as a disinfectant.

On the inside of the hatchery doorway is a large squishy wet mat. Our feet sink two inches down allowing some sort of sterilizing fluid to saturate the bottoms and sides of our shoes. Effectively cleaning everyone's shoes to prevent us from tracking in contamination.

These are just a few examples of the numerous



Great Lakes spotted muskie fingerling raised at the Wolff Lake State Fish Hatchery in Mattawan, Michigan. (Photo Credit: Greg Lashbrook/PolkaDot Perch)

disease prevention measures the hatchery staff takes throughout the process.

How many are there?

One of the most critical pieces of information for the hatchery to know is how many eggs they have.

So, how do they know?

A female muskie can produce 40,000 or more eggs. And the team might capture three or four females in one night. It's not practical to hand count 120,000 – 160,000 eggs. But the scientists have a way to get a fairly accurate count.

When the fertilized eggs arrive at the hatchery, the staff uses test tubes, petri dishes, and triple hand counts of a specific volume of eggs to extrapolate the overall total for each family group.

Having an accurate count at every step in the process is important.

The Michigan DNR's goal is to stock 40,000 muskie fingerlings each year. With a large percentage lost at every step in the process, the hatchery has to start with hundreds of thousands of eggs to successfully stock tens of thousands of fish. Such is the nature of hatchery-rearing fish, but muskies have the added challenge of being highly cannibalistic.

The key to keeping muskies from eating each other is making sure they

have plenty of other options without being wasteful because it turns out minnows are really expensive.

So, how do you know if there are enough minnows in the pond, but not too many? Do you need to place an order for a delivery? Or, can you wait a couple of days?

Knowing how many fingerlings are moved from the inside tanks to the outdoor ponds is the starting point. Knowing how many minnows have been added and how much each muskie can eat are also key, as are years of experience raising muskies in these ponds.

Matt Hughes has been raising muskie at the Wolff Lake State Fish Hatchery for more than 20 years. He regularly drives out to the muskie ponds to gauge the minnow count. He is so skilled at measuring them that he doesn't even have to get out of his truck.

Being the bait

When it comes to fight or flight, flathead minnows, which are stocked into the muskie ponds as food, have zero fight response. They're 100% flight.

Understandably, their flight response is particularly high in the ponds given their status as the bait. The minnows are like a group of friends walking through a haunted house. At the slightest noise, they all scream and jump in unison.

In the flathead's case, Hughes assured us that the sound of a car door slamming was enough for all of them to jump out of the water.

I thought — this I gotta see.

With my eyes fixed on the pond's surface, I eased my car door open and slammed it shut.

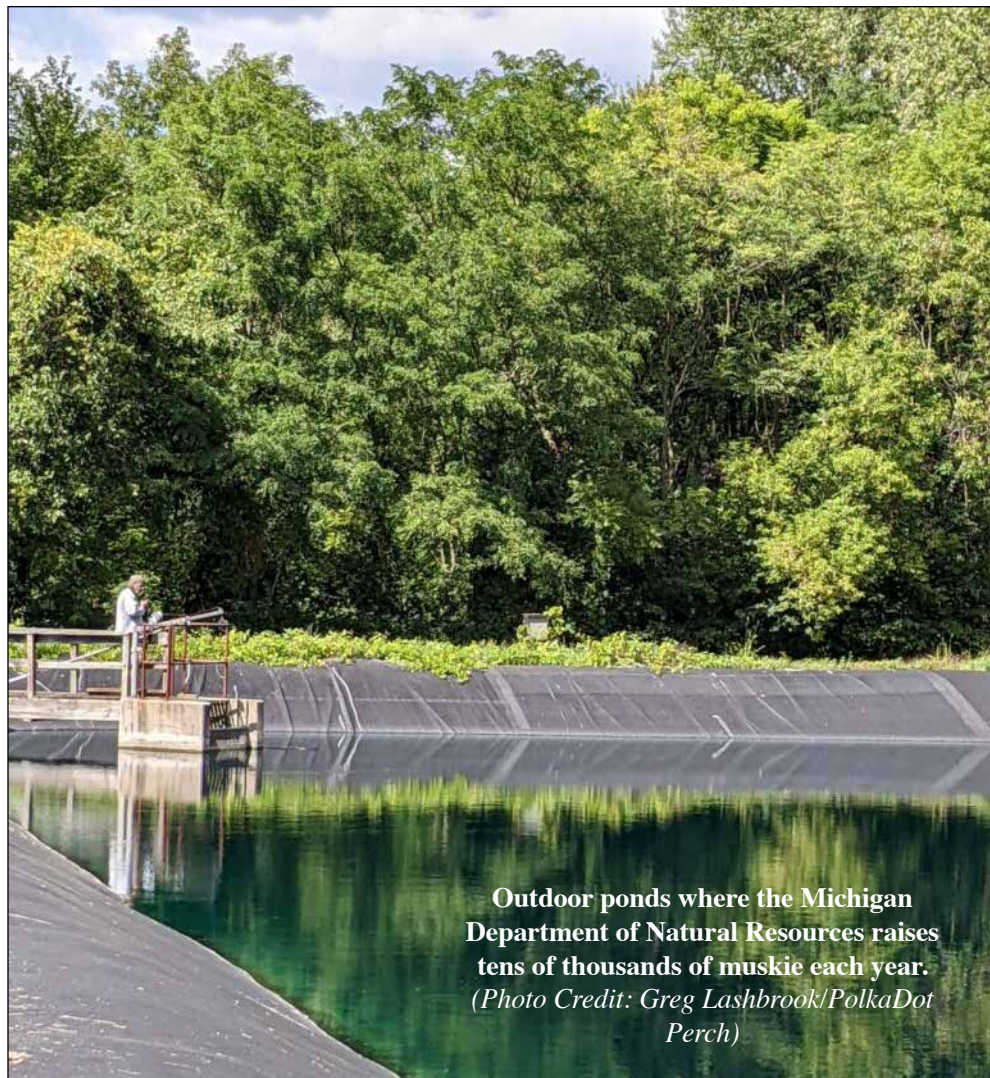
The surface immediately erupted with thousands of tiny fish. It was just a flash of movement, and

then they dissolved back into the water like raindrops on a puddle, leaving the surface rippling with tiny ringlets.

Hughes said honking the horn was an alternative method but we found it garnered little response. Although, as he also noted, the minnows wised up after the first slam or honk. Apparently, it's universally true that saying "Boo" is less effective the second time around.

To see the whole muskie rearing process, check out this month's episode of Great Lakes Now.

I Speak for the Fish is a monthly column written by Great Lakes Now Contributor Kathy Johnson, coming out the third Monday of each month. Publishing the author's views and assertions does not represent endorsement by Great Lakes Now or Detroit Public Television.



Outdoor ponds where the Michigan Department of Natural Resources raises tens of thousands of muskie each year. (Photo Credit: Greg Lashbrook/PolkaDot Perch)



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Consumers Energy, Iosco County Hold Prosperity Group Organizing Meeting

by **Manuela Kress**
www.iosconews.com

TAWAS CITY – More than 20 individuals, representing numerous stakeholders, gathered in the Iosco County Board of Commissioners meeting room on Thursday morning to discuss the formation of a prosperity group that will be responsible for having input into the future of the Consumers Energy operated dams in Iosco County.

Rich Castle, Consumers Energy community affairs manager for northeast Michigan, and Jamie Soboleski, Iosco County Controller and Finance Director, facilitated the meeting. A number of documents were distributed to attendees including an agenda, list of stakeholders to invite to join the Iosco River Hydro Prosperity Group, Roles and Responsibilities of the Prosperity Groups and the Consumers Energy “Planning for Our Hydro’s Future,” a one-page informational flyer.

Attendees introduced themselves and their organizational affiliations. AuSable Township Superintendent Eric Strayer, Oscoda Township Treasurer Jaimie McGuire, and Plainfield Township Supervisor Fred Lewis attended the meeting. Iosco County Commissioners Terry Dutcher, Charles Finley, Brian Loeffler and Chair Jay O’Farrell, each attended the meeting. Representatives from Develop Iosco, Save the Dams, a number of conservation related organizations, homeowners associations, and a staffer from Senator Michelle Hoytenga’s office also attended. The meeting was also available on Zoom.

Castle described the roles and responsibilities of the Iosco Prosperity Group. A decision was made by attendees that Iosco County would be the convener of any future meetings with Soboleski organizing the

meetings and Kathleen Murphy serving as the secretary. Attendees decided that the meetings should take place after work hours to accommodate stakeholders who are employed. With a number of township meetings taking place on Mondays and Wednesday, future meetings will likely take place on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays. McGuire stated that Oscoda Township has a couple of different venues that could accommodate the meetings.

Castle said the ideal group size would be 20-30 individuals and would include representatives from the homeowner associations that will be directly impacted by whichever decision is made. Castle described the four options that Consumers Energy has:

- Relicense the dams, meeting all the new regulatory requirements, and continue to generate power.
- Surrender the license and sell the dams to a third-party owner, who could maintain the dam structures and impoundments.
- Remove the dams and return the river to its natural state.
- Replace the dams with alternative structures.

Consumers had not originally thought selling the dams was an option but then began getting interest from other entities to purchase the dams.

As previously reported, decommissioning the dams is a lengthy process. A question that remains unanswered is “if the dams are decommissioned what does the future of the land look like?” Consumers Energy owns much of the land surrounding the dams and property owners have 100 year leases with Consumers Energy. Oscoda Township leases the Old Orchard Park Campground from Consumers Energy.



ORGANIZING MEETING – Rich Castle, Consumers Energy community affairs manager for Northeast Michigan, and Jamie Soboleski, Iosco County controller and finance director, facilitate a meeting with stakeholders on Feb. 8.

Photo by Manuela Kress

Castle noted that the plan developed for the dams in Iosco County may not be the same as the plan for dams in other parts of the state. There are six dams on the AuSable River that are located in three counties who share one river and one watershed.

Castle said if the dams are decommissioned a plan needs to be put in place so that 100% of the economic impact of the dams is not lost.

“How do we leverage 80% less and dwindle it down to 10% or 0%?” Castle asked. Castle said the prosperity groups would help create a framework for what Consumers is trying to achieve.

Iosco County Commissioner Terry Dutcher asked if Consumers can own an impoundment that does not generate electricity. Castle said that the community would need to work with the new buyer, if there is

differing opinions.

Sheri Schoenfield, who serves on the Save Our Dams steering committee and is a member of the Pine Acres Homeowners Association, asked that their group be included in the Iosco Prosperity Group. Schoenfield reported that there were currently 3,000 members of Save Our Dams.

Lewis asked if there would be one group or multiple groups that represented different counties. Castle responded that there would be separate groups but that they would meet together a couple of times per year. Lewis followed up with a question about whether an entity could buy one dam or would buy all 13 dams. Castle responded that Consumers Energy was looking at all possibilities and would need to see what makes the most sense once responses are received to the RFPs.

“All options are on the table,” Castle stated.



STAKEHOLDERS – Representatives from municipalities and a wide range of organizations attended the Iosco Prosperity Group organizing meeting.

Photo by Manuela Kress

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one. An impoundment facility uses a dam to store river water in a reservoir.

Former Oscoda Township Police Chief Mark David, who was representing the 7 Mile Property Owners Association, asked if the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license still applies if a private buyer purchases the dams. Castle responded that the FERC license that Consumers currently has would transfer to the new buyer.

McGuire asked what the future of the land looks like if the dams are sold off. Castle responded that he had no idea at this time. “We have a big role, a big opportunity,” Castle told attendees.

Soboleski said that she is very passionate about the topic and knows that many others in the room are too. She asked that everyone be respectful of others having

O’Farrell had questions about the conditions of the six dams and when they were last inspected. Castle referred him to the Future of Our Hydro-Dams webpage where information from the community meetings is posted. FERC requires annual inspection of the dams and Consumers Energy will continue to maintain the dams. Castle reported that a headgate was recently replaced at Five Dams and that safety is a priority.

Doug Ridenour, who said he is also on the Save Our Dams steering committee, asked about the collapse of the Edenville Dam. The Edenville Dam collapsed after heavy rains caused Wixom Lake levels to rise to record levels. When it failed, water surged

“Prosperity”
Continued on page 11

Construction Set on Effort to Keep Invasive Carp Out of the Great Lakes

Defenses like electric and bubble barriers will be installed at a crucial choke point in Illinois to prevent the fish from moving into Lake Michigan

“Prosperity”
Continued from page 10

down the Tittabawase River and overwhelmed the Sanford Dam. The resulting flooding damaged more than 2,500 homes and businesses.

Ridenour asked if a representative from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) or the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) should participate in the Iosco Prosperity Group meetings.

An attendee asked if downtown Oscoda businesses should be represented on the Iosco Prosperity Group. Oscoda-AuSable Chamber of Commerce Director George Samra did attend the meeting.

Castle acknowledged that homeowners have a unique license agreement with Consumers Energy to use docks on the impoundment and that they would potentially be directly impacted. Soboleski said she would get the contact information from Castle and send e-mails to the various homeowner association groups asking them to identify a representative.

“We’re here to get a job done and we need to work together to make that happen,” Castle told attendees.

An initial meeting will take place between representatives from Consumers Energy, representatives from the various prosperity groups and Public Sector Consultants, the consulting firm that facilitated the public community meetings. After that meeting a schedule will be developed for the prosperity groups.

As previously reported, 11 of the 13 hydro-electric dams in Michigan are up for relicensing in the next 10 years, by 2034. Both Cooke and Foote dams are licensed through 2034. If CE were to relicense the dams, it would be for an additional 50 years. Six of the 13 dams are situated on the AuSable River and include Mio, Alcona, Cooke, Foote, Five Channels, and Loud. Others are on the Manistee, Muskegon, Grand and Kalamazoo rivers.

Because relicensing with FERC is a 5 1/2 year process, the decision to relicense or decommission would need to be made by 2028. Decommissioning is a 10-12 year process. Divestment is a two- to six-year process. The 10-year timeline is detailed on the Consumers Energy The Future of Hydroelectric in Michigan webpage.

Consumers Energy recently announced that it will be releasing a request for proposals (RFP) for offers to purchase one or more of the dams in the state. According to the Consumers Energy hydro-electric dams webpage, the RFP will open Feb. 15, with participants moving through a two-stage evaluation and bidding process that should finish by the end of 2024.



Silver carp jump in the La Grange pool of the Illinois River as Illinois Natural History Survey staff work on the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program’s long-term monitoring program. Staff are electrofishing to monitor fish populations as they have ecological, recreational and commercial value to the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Photo courtesy of Illinois Natural History Survey

By Danielle Kaeding
www.wpr.org

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is slated to begin construction next year on a \$1.1 billion project in Illinois aimed at keeping invasive carp out of the Great Lakes.

The Army Corps and Illinois Department of Natural Resources held meetings about the project and toured the site this week. Engineers will install more defenses to keep the invasive fish from getting past a crucial choke point at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam along the Des Plaines River in Joliet, Illinois.

Scott Whitney, chief of project management with the Army Corps, said the plan includes using noise-makers, a bubble curtain,

an electric barrier and flushing lock.

“We are standing on the threshold of an opportunity to prevent an entire watershed from being invaded by these new invasive species,” Whitney said during a meeting on Tuesday. “We’ve seen their damages wreak havoc from the southern portions of the country.”

The invasive fish was first introduced to the southern United States in the early 1960s and 1970s, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Recently, more than 300 invasive carp were caught on the Mississippi River near Trempealeau as the fish have expanded northward.

“Carp”

Continued on page 12



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“Carp”

Continued from page 11

likely due to flooding that allowed them to move upstream. The invasive fish known for their ability to leap from the water when disturbed threaten the \$7 billion fishing industry and \$15 billion recreation boating industry on the Great Lakes. The fish outcompete native species because they can consume almost half of their body weight in food each day.

Titus Seilheimer, fisheries specialist with Wisconsin Sea Grant, said that raises concerns that invasive carp could change the food web if they become established in Lake Michigan.

“We already have issues with the quagga mussels filtering the algae, which means less zooplankton, which means less food for the little fish, which means less food for the big fish,” Seilheimer said. “If we throw in another fish that is a filter feeder as well, that could be a concern for our fisheries — both our sport fishery (and) the commercial fisheries.”

If introduced, Seilheimer said larger populations of invasive carp could succeed in nearshore areas like lower Green Bay and the Fox River up to the De Pere Dam. He noted early research indicated the fish may not be able to thrive in offshore areas where there’s less food. A more

recent study found invasive carp could survive on a diet that included detritus or what Seilheimer called the leftovers from quagga mussels filtering food on the bottom.

The Corps has identified 18 points where the fish could enter the Great Lakes, and Whitney said all have been sealed off except for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam.

Even so, live invasive carp have been found just miles from Lake Michigan and beyond barriers in the Chicago Area Waterway System, which connects Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River via the Lower Des Plaines and Illinois rivers.

The additional fortifications are being installed downstream of those electric barriers. Marc Smith, policy director for the National Wildlife Federation, said that provides more layers of protection to prevent their spread. He said it also reduces effects on shipping and barge traffic on the Chicago canal system that links the Chicago River with the Des Plaines River.

“Ships will still need to go through this lock system, and the set of controls. There will be some time that will be added on to allow ships to maneuver through the lock system when these controls are on,” Smith said. “But it’s not going to stop commerce.”

A construction contract is set to be awarded for the first phase of the project next year, and it will take about three years to build. The entire project will take up to 8 years to build as long as there’s sufficient funding.

Around \$274 million in federal money has already been made available to begin construction, including \$225.8 million provided under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The federal government will fund 90 percent of the \$1.1 billion effort, with Michigan and Illinois sharing \$114 mil-

lion of the project’s cost.

Tim Campbell, aquatic invasive species specialist for Wisconsin Sea Grant, acknowledged some people may experience sticker shock from the price tag of installing additional measures. However, he argued it saves money in terms of the work that would be necessary to adapt to an invasion in the Great Lakes.

“The way it changes people’s lives, to me, this is really a small investment relative to what the potential economic impacts are if we were to see an invasion,” Campbell said.

However, Illinois has not yet signed a project partnership agreement with the Army Corps. Michigan Radio reported the state is concerned about acquiring land for the project that may have contamination from a former power plant complex that burned coal. The federal agency said ongoing negotiations indicate an agreement could be executed yet this year.

Smith said the project is the best chance for reducing the risk of invasive

carp getting into the Great Lakes.

“If we can just get it across the goal line, I will feel much better,” Smith said, “and sleep better knowing that we have more assurances to help keep carp out.”

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Invasive carp, clockwise from right: Grass Carp, Silver Carp, Black Carp, Bighead Carp.

Photos from www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov



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In Memory of Charlie Keebler

By Rich Chapman

Long time South Haven Steelheaders member and past president Charlie Keebler passed away on Tuesday, January 2. Charlie had been an active member of the South Haven Chapter for many years. His contributions included organizing and running the Salmon in the Classroom program. At one time, he had 6 different schools involved in

the program including Paw Paw Middle School. The Paw Paw kids were special to Charlie. Every year he made sure that several of us were at the dam on Maple Lake to assist with their Field Day. That included releasing the salmon raised by the students and also providing casting lessons and demonstrations. Charlie served on the chapter Board of Directors

and was president for several years. Every year, he helped clean fish for the Chapter's annual fish boil, helped set up and was the first person people talked to when they got in line to eat. He was a great ambassador in representing the Steelheaders and our local chapter. Rest in peace, Charlie, you were a great friend, advisor and a wonderful fishing buddy.



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9	Batteries Plus	3031 28th Street SE	Kentwood	MI	49512	10% & Member Discount 616-575-0500 www.batteriesplus.com
10	Batteries Plus	5839 Hrvey Street, Suite 6	Norton Shores	MI	49444	10% & Member Discount 231-747-9168 www.batteriesplus.com
11	Big Papa Sportfishing	50642 Oregon Ave.	Novi	MI	48374	10% except on equipment
12	Black Dog Outfitters	4444 14 Mile Rd	Rockford	MI	49341	10% Discount on fly tying materials, hooks & lines. www.blackdog-outfitters.com
13	BoatU.S.					\$15 Annual Membership Dues - Use Membership # GA83723B
14	Bob's Outdoors	Statewide	www.bobsoutdoors.com			10% Discount (www.bobsoutdoors.com)
15	Brenner's Service	4765 W River Dr	Comstock Park	MI	46321	5% exclusions may apply. 616-784-9872 dawnbrenner@hotmail.com
16	Dayton, Rick R, DDS	169 Louis Campau Promenade Ste 2A	Grand Rapids	MI	49503	20% off all services (616)458-2545
17	Cascade Capital Funding	4251 Cascade Rd. SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49546	Free appraisal up to \$300.00
18	Dockside Marine, Inc	4320 State Rd	Glennie	MI	48737	15% Off Parts & Accessories (Excludes Electronics)
19	Dunham's Sports	Statewide				10% Discount # 50050/3
20	Firestone - Metro 25	19268 Middlebelt	Livonia	MI	48152	\$20 off on \$200 or more on service www.metro25firestone.com
21	Fish with Jim Outfitters	http://www.fishwithjimoutfitters.com/	248-252-1277			Discount \$50.00 off the total trip price.
22	Glacier Corporation	1021 Fuller St.	Santa Ana	CA	92701	Aquarium Chillers for "salmon in classroom" \$625 + 60 (s&h) = \$685
23	Great Lakes Angler Magazine		www.glangler.com			Discount 50% OFF 1 year subscription, members only! Use code MSSFA
24	Homestead Resort on Betsie River	2399 Dam Rd	Benzonia	MI	49616	10% In Season, 25% Off Season (homestead@crystal-rentals.com)
25	Insta-Launch Campground	20 Park Ave	Manistee	MI	49660	Member Discount
26	Insurance Shop/Fremont Ins.	824 Water St.	East Jordan	MI	49727	10% Discount off insurance for MSSFA Group Members
27	Jim Waldron Pontiac, Buick, GMC	1146 S. State Rd	Davison	MI	48423	Contact Nick Russloll for Sales, 10% off all parts not to exceed \$100.00
28	J Smith Custom Tackle	1136 E Hughes Lake Road	Rose City	MI	48654	15% - 20% off depending on rod. Customrodsbyjsmith.com 989-685-2819
29	K & M Marine	14990 Telegraph Rd	Redford	MI	48239	10% off merchandise except sale items (www.kandmmarine.com)
30	Kamp Oil Inc	6467 Manistee St	Fredric	MI	49733	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
31	Kamp Oil Inc	3650 Eastern Ave SE	Grand Rapids	MI	49508	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
32	Beebe Oil Co (aka Kamp Oil)	4999 22 Mile Rd	Utica	MI	48317	Citgo Sea & Snow 4-1 gal case 13.50/gal = 54/case, other disc avail.
33	Lapeer Boat Service	3556 Fort Knox Dr	Lapeer	MI	48446	10% off parts and labor (810-245-6038)
34	Liberty Tax Service	544 E. 8th St.	Holland	MI	49423	\$20.00 Discount on tax service
35	Logan's Run Muskegon River Cottage Rental	1648 Gardner St.	Newaygo	MI	49337	10% Discount www.logansrun.us 616-485-4501
36	Mark's Sport Shop	11530 Mason Dr	Grant	MI	49327	Member Discount
37	MUCC	2101 Wood Street	Lansing	MI	48912	\$18.00 Membership Dues
38	Patriot Custom Fishing Rods	35919 6th Ave.	Gobles	MI	49055	10% Discount 269-628-5227
39	Richfield RV	Statewide				10% Discount
40	River Raisin Marina & Campground	2502 E. Elm Avenue	Monroe	MI	48161	Buy 1 get 1 free - call 313-575-4367 (www.riverraisinmarina.com)
41	RX Optical	Statewide				Plan 308
42	Salmon Trout Steelheader		www.salmontroutsteelheader.com			Discount 50% OFF 1 year subscription, members only! Use code MSSFA
43	Sun Coast Marine	1172 68th Street	South Haven	MI		Member discount
44	The Angling Outpost	2480 Duck Lane Rd	Whitehall	MI	49461	www.anglingoutpost.com 5% use coupon "steelheader" for online purchases
45	Traxstech Corp	14754 N Oakley	Chesaping	MI		989-845-5969 10%
46	Van's Sport Center	1855 Alpine Ave.	Walker	MI	49544	10% Discount
47	Warrior Lures	5915 Lillian La	Traverse City	MI	49684	10% Discount on all product ordered (www.warriorlures.com)
48	West Marine		Bay City	MI		10%
49	West Michigan Propeller	847 Ionia Ave. NW	Grand Rapids	MI	49503	10% Discount
50	* Your Business Here!					

2024 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Location
March	9	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	On the River Tavern
March	23	Kalamazoo River Spring Steelhead	Allegan Dam
May	18	Lake Michigan Spring Tournament	Benton Harbor / SH
June	1	Connie McGowan Invitational	Lake Erie DBBC
July	13	Portage Lake Panfish / Family Picnic	Portage Lake
August	3	Lake Michigan Memorial	South Haven
August	17	Veterans Outing	South Haven
October	26	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
November	9	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	16	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
November	30	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	7	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	On the River Tavern
December	14	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting
 Meeting Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94.
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 River Tournament - Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Lake Tournament - Dan Foster at 269-370-3693
 battlecreeksteelheaders.com

2024 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
April	4	Spring Meeting	
May 30 - June 2		Memorial Tournament and GH Offshore	
TBD		GH/GR Chapter Challenge	
August 2-15		Weeklong Plus Contest	
August	15	Picnic	
September	7	Sportsman For Youth	
TBD		Christmas Party	

Other Events TBD
 For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarm@gmail.com
 www.ghsteelheaders.com

2024 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
March	7-10	Outdoor Sport Show	DeVos Place, Grand Rapids
March	15-17	*Spring Fishing Outing STC	
March	25	Chapter Meeting	
April	1	Update of GRSH Membership	Pay dues at meeting
April	29	Chapter Meeting	
May	20	Chapter Meeting	
June	6-9	*Summer Fishing Event	Wabasis Lake STC
June	15	*Lake Erie Walleye Contest STC	
June	24	Chapter Meeting	
July	8	Chapter Family Picnic	Johnson Park
August	3	*Fall Big Lake Outing STC	
August		*Chapter Challenge / Double D Event	(stay tuned for dates)
August	26	Members Meeting	
September	14	Sportsman For Youth	Muskegon
September	30	Members Meeting	
October	1	Chapter Sponsored Buck Contest**	
October	*26	Fall River Contest STC	
October	28	Chapter Meeting	
November	3	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	
November	25	Chapter Meeting	
December	6	Christmas Party	Watch for details**

** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**

Events open to the public
 Meeting Location - Elks #48, 917 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids
 Time: 6:00pm-7pm Social Hour with food and beverage followed by Speaker
 Board Meetings will take place after the regular Member Meeting
 Email Grand Rapids Steelheaders: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com
 ** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**

New address:
 P.O. Box 74450
 Grand Rapids, MI 49514

2024 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
April	13	Manistee - Salmon / Lake Trout
April	27	State wide - Take Pictures
May	4	Linwood Beach - Walleye
May	18	Linwood Beach - Walleye
June	1	Sebawang - Walleye
June	15	Sebawang - Walleye (Kid's Day)
June	29	Linwood Beach - Walleye
July	13	Manistee - Salmon
July	27	Ludington - Salmon
August	10	Ludington - Salmon (2 Day)
August	24	Manistee - Salmon (2 Day)
September	7	Manistee / Frankfort - Salmon T.B.D.
December	14	Banquet V.F.W. Midland

Membership meetings are the first Tuesday every month (no meeting in August)
 Meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 Phone: 989-496-3410

Board meetings begin at 7:00pm. Please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the outing whether you plan on attending or not attending. On the day of the outing, call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72.

2024 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
March	12	Board Meeting
April	2	Board Meeting
April	18	Membership
May	7	Board Meeting
May	18	Spring Challenge
May	21	League Start
June	3	Board Meeting
June	8	All Species/BMM
June	29	Kids & Kings
July	1	Board Meeting
July	25	Membership
July	27	Summer Challenge
August	5	Board Meeting
August	24	Ladies Tournament
August	27	League End
September	9	Board Meeting
September	10	League Dinner
October	1	Board Meeting
November	5	Board Meeting
December	3	Board Meeting
December	5	Membership

Board meetings held at: TBD Locations
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina
 Doors open at 6 pm.,
 Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org,
 or call Jimmy Van Brocklin 616-240-7017
 or email Brad Stephenson at
 brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

Board meetings held at: TBD Locations
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina
 Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

2024 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
March	5	General Membership Meeting	
March	23	MI Steelhead Challenge Manistee River / Pier	Adam Trenz / Eric Braden
April	2	General Membership Meeting - Swap Meet / Awards	
April	13	Clinton Rier Clean Up	Jay Labban
April	13	Brown Trout Tournament	Ludington - Dave Zawacki
April	20	J. Robertson Memorial Walleye Tour - Detroit R / Erie - Robert Grech / Christ Christoph	
April	27	L. Huron Lexington Tournament	Bob Schulz
April	28	L. Huron Lexington Tournament	March Traver
May	7	General Membership Meeting	
May	11	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Bob Schulz
May	18	Pt. Moulle' Kayak/ SB SM Bass/Walleye	Keith Childs
May	18	Howard Tanner Salmon Tournament	Benton Harbor Saturday Chris Thompson / Dennis Kelley
May	19	Howard Tanner Salmon Tournament	Benton Harbor Sunday Mark Platt / Dennis Kelley
May	25	Bruin Lake Kayak / Small Boat	Chuck Davis
May	26	Carp Bow Hunting Event	Gale Frazee
June	1	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	TBD
June	1	Sterling SP Walleye Tournament	Fabian Sepulveda
June	4	General Membership Meeting	
June	8	Cristal Waters Kayak / SB / Shore Fishing	Eric Braden
June	15	Cornwall Flooding Kayak / Small Boat	Eric Braden
June	22	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Bob Schulz / Dennis Kelley
June	23	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Fabian Sepulveda
July	9	Club Summer Picnic	Mark Platt/Dave Zawacki
July	11	Erieau Tournament - Thursday	Erieau, Canada Clyde Schoen/C Christoph
July	13	Erieau Tournament - Friday	Erieau, Canada Henry Nabors/Ron Bellemore
July	13	Manistee River Cleanup Day @High Bridge	Roger Hinchcliff
July	25	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Thursday	Gale Frazee / Tom Abdelnour
July	27	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Saturday	Dave & Kim Zawacki
July	28	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Sunday	M & K Traver
August	6	General Membership Meeting	
August	10	Salmon Tournament - Saturday	Manistee - Henry Nabors / Dave Hutton
August	11	Salmon Tournament - Sunday	Manistee - Marc / Kirk Traver
August	17	Lake Tournament	Frankfort - Robert Grech / C Christoph
August	18	Salmon Tournament	Frankfort - Bill Dodge / C Christoph
August	24	PM Lake Kayak / Small Boat	Eric Braden
September	3	General Membership Meeting	
September	7	Manistee Kayak / SB & Pier Tournaments	Eric Braden
September	28	Manistee River Tournaments	Fabian Sepulveda
September	29	Muskegon Lake Salmon Campout Kayak / SB	Keith Childs
October	1	General Membership Meeting	
October	12	Lake Erie Perch Outing	Dave Zawacki
October	16	Captain/Crew/River Angler 2023 Calendar Mtg	Kelley/Trenz/Nabors/Zawacki
October	19	Ludington Pier / Beach Event	Eric Braden
November	2	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Zawacki/Braden/Trenz
November	12	General Membership Meeting - 2nd Tues.	Election Day Room at Senior Center #5
November	30	Ohio Walleye Tournament	Dave Zawacki
December	3	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	7	PM River Tournament	Marc Traver / Adam Trenz
December	14	Huron River Tournament	Roger Hinchcliff

** ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
 7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road
 WEB Site: Go to www.metroweststeelheaders.org
 If you have questions, contact MetroWest Steelheaders, PO BOX 531927, Livonia MI 48153-1927

Contact: President Bob Schulz, bobschulz7@gmail.com, 248-915-0043
 Membership Director Henry Nabors 248-225-4964

2024 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
March	7-10	Ultimate Sport Show - DeVos Place, Grand Rapids
March	21	Fishing Seminar - South Haven American Legion Post 49*
April	18	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - South Haven American Legion Post 49*
May	4-5	Horizon Bank Quake Coho Classic - Michigan City, IN
May	10-11	St. Joe Tourney / SW Chapter
May	17	South Haven Pro Am Tournament Captains Registration - American Legion Post 49
May	18-19	South Haven Pro Am Tournament
May	25	Merle Morris Tournament - River Bend Boat Club
June	8	South Haven Steelheaders' Harbor Light Brewery Ladies Tournament
June	8-9	Free Fishing Weekend
June	14-16	South Haven Harborfest
August	10	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival - August 8-11th)
August	17	SHS Operation Injured Soldier/SH Salute to Veterans
August	31	Labor Day Weekend
November	23	South Haven Steelheaders River Tournament
December		South Haven Steelheaders Holiday Party 2024
<p>2024 South Haven Steelheaders Membership & Board Meeting Dates NO JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING FEB 15th - 3rd Thursday, Guest speaker - TBD MAR 21st - 3rd Thursday (week after GR Ultimate Sports Show, 3/7-10) - Best Chance Fishing Seminar APRIL 18th - 3rd Thursday - Southern Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - Dr. Dan O'Keefe presenting MAY 16th - 3rd Thursday *prior to SHS Pro/Am - Membership meeting. JUNE 20th - 3rd Thursday JULY 18th - 3rd Thursday AUG 8th - 2nd Thursday - *Prior to the Annual Fish Boil SEP 19th - 3rd Thursday - Regular & Board meeting to prioritize & set next year's events. ID event chairs. OCT 17th - 3rd Thursday - Regular and Board meeting to finalize next year's events and set calendar NOV 7th - 1st Thursday - Regular and Board Meeting to finalize budget and calendar December - No meeting in lieu of Holiday Party The 2025 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting is the 1st Wednesday of November (11/6/24)</p> <p>Note: All Board and membership meetings are generally held the third Thursday of each month except for special circumstances such as Pro Am Captain's Meeting set up in May, Fish Boil organizational meeting in August and prior to Deer Season in November. Meeting Location: South Haven American Legion Post 49, 129 Michigan Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090 Board Meetings start at 5:45pm and membership meetings at 7:00pm. For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com</p>		

2024 Southwest MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
Membership meetings and board meeting are held the second Thursday of each month but please confirm online for the most updated information. www.swmsteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders			
March	14	Quarterly Meeting - Spring Big Lake Fishing Techniques	
May	9	Schu's Shootout Big Lake Tournament	
May	10-11	Schu's Summer Challenge Tournament (Tournament Trail Event)	
June	13	Quarterly Meeting - Summer Run Steelhead & Offshore Fishing the Thermocline	
July	27	Trolling with the Troops Fishing Event	
October	10	Quarterly Meeting - Fall Run Salmon and Steelhead	
December	7	Winter Challenge River Fishing Tournament	
Membership Meetings Held at: St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022 Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM Contact: Jim Marohn 269-208-2784			



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Plastic Or Live?

By Bob Jensen

Those of us who have fished a long time have seen many changes and advancements in the equipment and the baits that we use when we're trying to catch a fish. One of the changes that has affected many of us is the development of plastic baits and their place in the world of fishing. It wasn't so long ago that many fishing guides or walleye tournament contestants, when they had to catch fish, were adamant that live bait was the ticket. Today, that's changed. Plastic baits have become very popular and are often effective for putting fish on the end of our line. There are several reasons for that.

Plastic baits offer many advantages over live bait. Live bait requires care. Modern aerated minnow buckets do a good job of keeping minnows lively, but nonetheless, effort is required. There are times when some species of minnows or leeches are hard to find, and some states have rules regarding minnow transportation. Plastic bait doesn't require special care. It will be useful for many, many days on the water.

Plastic bait comes in a large variety of shapes, colors, and scents. Live bait doesn't. A large variety of shapes and colors is a big advantage. There are times

when a particular color or shape will be more productive.

In addition to the variety offered by plastic baits, they last longer on the hook. A jig/minnow/leech/crawler worked along a weedline in the summer will certainly catch fish, but will also be attacked by panfish. So will a jig/plastic combo. The difference is that the jig/plastic will withstand the frequent panfish pecks. And live bait won't stay on the jig nearly as long as plastic when snap-jigging through and around vegetation. The jig/plastic allows for a lot more fishing and a lot less re-baiting.

Walleye anglers have learned that in the summer, a spinner rig tipped with a plastic crawler trolled behind a bottom-bouncer is an efficient way to catch walleyes. A spinner rig and live bait will do the job, but perch and sheepshead will rip the live bait off frequently. Again, with plastic your bait is in the water more of the time. Additionally, those walleye anglers have discovered that there are times when an orange or chartreuse plastic crawler will be much more productive than the real deal.

For just fish catchin', a Rage Grub on a 3/8th ounce jighead fished with a slow, steady retrieve will catch any predator fish in the area. White, chartreuse,

or green pumpkin Grubs worked around mid-depth structure or along a weedline will catch bass, pike, and walleyes.

2022 Bassmaster Rookie of the Year Jay Przekurat learned at a young age that plastic baits needed to be a significant part of his bass-catching arsenal and has become very proficient with all sorts of techniques that utilize plastic. He has supreme confidence in a 4" Rage Bug rigged on a jig or Texas-Rig. Plastic baits enable an angler to present a bait to a bass in virtually any situation: Deep water or shallow, heavy or sparse vegetation, spring, summer, fall and winter.

Plastic baits, like any bait, won't catch fish everywhere all the time, but they will catch fish anywhere most of the time. If you want to catch more fish, you should include plastic baits in your fishing toolbox.



2024 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
May	4	6:00am	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Harbor Beach Marina
May	16	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
June	8	6:00am	Veterans Fishing Outing	Harbor Beach Marina
July	18	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
October	17	7:30pm	Regular Meeting	Ubyl Foxhunters
Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.				

2024 Thunderbay Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Information
March	2	7:00pm	Annual Meeting / Dinner 4:00
April	8	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
May	2	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
May	18	5:30am	Alpena tournament
June	8	5:30am	Presque Isle Tournament
June	22, 23	5:30am	Presque Isle Tournament, both mornings
July	1	7:00pm	Alpena tournament
August	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
August	23	7:00pm	Rogers City Tournament
September	9	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
October	7	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
December	2	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
Contact Dan Bouchard at dan-bouchard@hotmail.com for inquiries.			

2024 White River Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event information
Note: All meetings will be held at 6:30 pm at the VFW, any changes in location will be decided a couple of days before the meeting. - Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.			
March	7	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
April	4	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
May	2	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
June	6	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
July			No Meeting
August	1	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
September	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
October	3	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
November	7	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
December	5	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW

The Spring Fishing and Boat Show

Free Admission

Free Parking

March 29th & 30th



Kevin VanDam



Jonathon VanDam



Mark Zona



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